

KANTIAN PHILOSOPHY IN THE LIGHT OF EARLY BUDDHISM

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§ 1. The Philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is generally referred to as *Kritik* in his principal writings in original German.¹ It is commonly translated into English by the French word *critique*; however it is not precisely a criticism but a philosophy of "critical analysis"². It is in this sense that we refer to Kantian thought as 'critical philosophy'. This philosophy is a store-house of knowledge which deserves to be examined, explored and interpreted. Much research has been carried out in this field but there is a great deal more to be done. In spite of Kant's lengthy works we would maintain that his philosophy is still abrupt or incomplete in some aspects. There are many concepts in this philosophy which are not clear enough and are also not complete in themselves. Our purpose here is to examine the main teachings of Kantian thought in the light of early Buddhism which is much more wider, precise, practical and deeper than the former. Kantian philosophy has many interesting ideas which are not found in any other school of Western thought. Therefore our enterprise may yield some profitable and stimulating results.

§ 2. Kantian thought, as mentioned above, is referred to as critical philosophy. But Kant does not appear to have given any definition of the concept in question. It seems to have been so-called because of its special function of offering a critical analysis of 'pure reason' together with some critical remarks now and then on the philosophical doctrines that preceded it in Europe. But an examination of Kantian works seems to imply, as mentioned above, that this is more a philosophy of *analysis* than that of *criticism*. The purpose and the extent of this analysis deserves to be inquired into. Critical philosophy can primarily be seen in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* which is the most important "Critique" for our purpose. This text makes an attempt to analyse the functioning of the human mind with special reference to its reception of the image of the empirical world. He analyses human knowledge into three units: (a) object

1. Cf., for example, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, Insel -Verlag, Wixobiden, 1956.
2. See Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (Washington Square Press, Inc, New York, 1961) p. 265.